

Let me be clear: I do not believe that offshore drilling can ever be made safe enough to put the beaches and tourist economy of New Jersey at risk. There will always be the chance of equipment failure or human error that produces a catastrophic result, regardless of the level of technology employed. No amount of oil or gas is worth the potential destruction of the state's lifeblood. I also believe that a continued dependence on offshore oil and gas, from any part of the country, keeps us from addressing the real issue that we should be focusing on: how to move to a renewable energy economy and ensure long-lasting energy and climate security.

However, I acknowledge that we cannot get there overnight, and offshore drilling will continue in places like the Gulf of Mexico, at least for the time being. But while it is happening, we should ensure that it is being done with the absolute best safety and environmentally responsible technology available, and I urge my colleagues to join me in getting to that point by supporting the Offshore Drilling Safety Technology Improvement Act of 2013.

HONORING THOMAS E.
SCHWEDHELM

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the Chief of Police for the City of Santa Rosa, California, Tom Schwedhelm, who is retiring after a 26-year career in law enforcement.

Chief Schwedhelm worked as a cadet and then a correctional officer in the Sonoma County Jail prior to graduating from the Santa Rosa Training Center's Police Academy in 1983.

In 1996, Tom Schwedhelm was promoted to Sergeant working with Sex Crimes & Family Violence investigations. He also had several collateral assignments: Special Response Unit Team Member and Team Leader; an Instructor in Use of Force, Chemical Agents, and Crowd Control; and an Ethics Facilitator.

In 2002 he was promoted to Lieutenant and was promoted to Captain in 2004 as the Captain in charge of both the Field Services Division and the Special Services Division. In March 2009, he was appointed as the Acting Chief of Police; he was subsequently appointed as the official Chief of Police for the City of Santa Rosa on May 3, 2009.

Chief Schwedhelm was instrumental in developing one of the first Victim Services Programs, and assisted in the implementation of CHOICES Grant Program, a community-wide effort to address gang violence in the community, as well as the Family Justice Center, the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force and the Police Department Succession Planning.

Chief Schwedhelm is a second generation law enforcement officer. He and his wife, Jackie, have lived in Santa Rosa for 22 years, where they have raised their two children.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Schwedhelm has served the City of Santa Rosa well during his distinguished career. It is therefore appropriate that we commend him for his many years of public service and wish him well on his retirement.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN EGYPT

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, a hearing that I convened last week examined the escalating human rights abuses in Egypt. It was fitting that we held the hearing on December 10, International Human Rights Day, because we are witnessing grievous violence and other abuses directed against religious and political minorities, particularly the Copts and other Christians, about which our government and the media has said far too little—which seems to be a pattern worldwide.

The persecution of Christians is escalating. Witness the slaughter of Christians in the Central African Republic (CAR). Bishop Nongo of the CAR told my committee that Christians were being targeted because of their faith while the U.N., the United States, and the rest of the world looked on. Last Thursday, I chaired a hearing on American pastor Saeed Abedini who is jailed and suffering torture in Iran. Pastor Abedini's wife, Naghmeh, told my committee: "While I am thankful for President Obama's willingness to express concern about my husband and the other imprisoned Americans in Iran during his recent phone conversation with Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, I was devastated to learn that the administration didn't even ask for my husband's release when directly seated across the table from the leaders of the government that holds him captive. My husband is suffering because he is a Christian. He is suffering because he is an American. Yet, his own government, at least the Executive and diplomatic representatives, has abandoned him. Don't we owe it to him as a nation to stand up for his human rights, for his freedom?"

After President Mubarak resigned in February of 2011, the world hoped for a new Egypt, a just government for all Egyptians, which would not make President Mubarak's mistakes—but reality has been just the opposite.

Horrific anti-Christian pogroms have taken place under each of the post-Mubarak governments. For some of these abuses, the governments bear the responsibility of inaction. For others they bear direct responsibility. In recent months, undercurrents of abuse and contempt for human dignity long existing in Egypt have turned into flash floods of violence.

For example, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces presided over the Maspero protest massacre in October 2011. At least 25 people were killed and more than 300 injured—almost all of them Copts—when the military drove trucks through the crowd and used live ammunition against the unarmed protesters.

Under the now-displaced Morsi government three low-level soldiers involved were charged with minor crimes and received two- to three-year sentences. No commanding officers were held responsible for ordering or failing to prevent the deadly assaults.

While Mr. Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, at times voiced support for an Egypt that was home to Muslims and Christians, his inaction belied his rhetoric. In April of 2012, St. Mark's Cathedral,

seat of the Coptic Pope, was attacked by 30–40 Muslim youths. While dozens of Copts were sheltering inside, security forces joined the mob. Rather than dispersing the crowd, they participated in the all-night attack or stood idly by as rocks, gasoline bombs, and gas canisters were lobbed into the iconic cathedral. Despite this, President Morsi denied that the clash was sectarian in nature.

After Mr. Morsi was removed in July of this year, the military ended the Muslim Brotherhood's sit-in with violence, killing hundreds of protesters. Tragically, some in the Muslim Brotherhood scapegoated the Copts although the Copts had nothing to do with the military's violent response.

On August 14, a day that will be remembered as the worst day for Copts in 700 years, thirty-seven churches, five schools, three Bible societies, four other Christian institutions, and many homes and businesses were burned or damaged by mobs. More than 100 deaths were documented in the initial spate of violence and its aftermath.

Some Copts have charged the current military government in Egypt with allowing the attacks on Coptic persons, businesses, churches, and homes to continue—often in sight of police stations and in spite of repeated and direct calls for help—in order to solidify government power as the only alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as to justify their own heavy-handed crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Muslim Brotherhood denies any involvement in the attacks occurring across the country, and has at times condemned them.

Yet the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party Branch in Helwan reportedly posted a statement holding the Coptic Pope responsible for Morsi's removal and otherwise linked Copts to attacks on the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood also called for Friday prayers to be held in an evangelical church in Minya after it was occupied and converted into a mosque on August 15.

Whoever the attackers are—and that is one thing we hope to learn more about today—the bottom line is that Coptic citizens are having their most basic human rights—freedom of religion, freedom of association, and equal protection of the laws—denied.

We can never rest while human dignity is so grossly trampled on—nor can we ever accept the suffering that has marked Coptic life for decades, very much including the abductions, forced conversions, and forced marriage of Coptic girls and women. These abuses have continued unabated, and, by some reports, have escalated sharply following the Arab Spring, as has the abuse of the Egyptian courts to prosecute blasphemy cases against Christians, moderate Muslims and secularists.

Moreover, despite the nearly 1.5 billion dollars in foreign aid American taxpayers give Egypt each year, neither the Mubarak government nor the Morsi government, or now the military government, has seen fit to return kidnapped American citizen children Noor and Ramsey Bower, who were abducted by their mother to Egypt in 2009 in violation of valid U.S. court orders, to the United States. They, along with about 30 other American children in Egypt, are forced to live without the love and guidance of an American parent who daily fights for their return, while being stripped of half of their culture and half of their identity.

In addition, freedom of expression continues to be under fire. The current interim government has been arresting and jailing journalists critical of the military government, jamming the broadcast signals, deporting foreign reporters, and otherwise closing the offices of news outlets that are "broadcasting lies."

In his September 23rd speech to the United Nations General Assembly, the President stated that his "... approach to Egypt reflects a larger point: the United States will at times work with governments that do not meet the highest international expectations, but who work with us on our core interests." These core interests were earlier defined in the speech to include the "Camp David Accords and counter-terrorism" efforts but not, I believe mistakenly, to include human rights.

Human rights, and the intrinsic dignity of every human being from womb to the tomb, are important in and of themselves. But for those who fail to grasp this, there is another important point to be made: It is in the strategic interest of the United States to encourage governments to respect the rights of their people, because governments that fail to do so are in the final analysis unstable: This should be the abiding lesson of the Arab Spring.

The president also stated that future U.S. support to Egypt "will depend upon Egypt's progress in pursuing a democratic path." Again, it is unclear what criteria this entails. What if the democratic path does not include protection of human rights, such as what we saw under the Morsi government and now the interim government?

It is not democracy per se that is to be the goal, but rather a duly-elected constitutional government that respects minorities, the separation of power, and human rights. Tyranny of the majority is not an acceptable option.

What is clear is that the U.S. needs a new approach. This administration's short-sighted approach of not clearly linking aid to the protection of human rights in Egypt has been unequivocally ineffective. It is my hope that our hearing today will shed light on what went wrong and how the United States can be more effective in protecting human rights going forward.

HONORING BISHOP PRINCE E.W. BRYANT, SR., OF HOUSTON, TEXAS, "SOLDIER OF THE CROSS" WHO HAS MINISTERED THE GOSPEL FOR 50 YEARS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Bishop Prince E.W. Bryant, Sr., the legendary pastor of the legendary Island of Hope Church of God in Christ Church in Houston, Texas. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Bishop Bryant's service in the ministry of the Gospel.

To mark this great occasion, Bishop Bryant is being honored as a "Soldier of the Cross" by the Texas South Central Jurisdiction of The Church of God in Christ, Inc.

Born in East Texas, Bishop Bryant was the fifteenth child of Deacon Bishop and Mamie Bryant. He was saved and filled with the Holy

Ghost on March 18, 1963, and began preaching on March 25, 1963 at the age of 15 under the late Elder Eddie Davis. He was licensed under the late Bishop C. H. Nelson and ordained by the late Bishop S. M. Crouch of Los Angeles, California.

Bishop Bryant was attended public school at Concord High School in Mt. Enterprise, Texas. He later attended LIFE Bible College, Los Angeles, California, from which he received his Bachelors of Theology; and the Family Bible Institute in Denver, Colorado, from which he was awarded a Doctorate of Divinity in 1993.

Bishop Bryant began his pastoral ministry on August 6, 1969. Over the next 50 years, pastored six churches: Bethlehem COGIC in Mt. Enterprise, Texas; Evangelist Temple COGIC in Bay City, Texas; Eastside COGIC in Lufkin, Texas; and The City of Refuge COGIC, Livingston Memorial COGIC, and The Island of Hope COGIC (formerly Anderson Memorial), all in Houston, Texas. He remodeled or built three of these churches.

Bishop Bryant has served the church from his youth to present in many capacities: as Sunday School Superintendent, Jurisdictional Chaplain, Jurisdictional Young People's Willing Worker President, District Superintendent, Jurisdictional Executive Secretary, President of Jurisdictional Minister's and Worker's Institute, Chairman of Jurisdictional Annual Leadership Conference, and as Administrative Assistant to the late Jurisdictional Bishop, Bishop N. H. Henderson.

Nationally, Bishop Bryant has served the Church of God in Christ as a member of the General Assembly Executive Committee, Commissions for Constitutional Convention Committee, General Council of Pastors and Elders Judiciary Review Committee, and Executive Board Member of the Church of God in Christ Urban Initiative.

Bishop Bryant has also actively involved himself in the civic life of the community. He served two terms as President of the Advisory Board to the Mayor of Houston under Mayors Kathryn J. Whitmire and Mayor Bob Lanier.

Bishop Bryant also served on the Civilian Review Committee for the Houston Police Department, as Chairman of Religious Committee, as founder of the Project David Ex-Felon Re-Acclimation Job Program, as Vice President of the Houston Northeast Quadrant Citizens Chamber of Commerce, as Chairman of Houston-Harris County Regional Substance Abuse Faith-Based Task Force Committee, and member of the Executive Board of the Minister's Conference at Prairie View A & M University.

In times of disaster, Bishop Bryant can be counted on to provide comfort and assistance. In 1983, he organized and chaired the Emergency Disaster Relief Texas Inter-Jurisdictional Council, which coordinated government entities and non-profit charity organizations such as FEMA, Red Cross and United Way.

When Tropical Storm Allison hit in 2001, Bishop Bryant facilitated a benefit service. In 2005, during Hurricane Katrina he organized the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund and was the Coordinator of the Church of God in Christ Distribution Center, a 20,000 square foot warehouse which distributed food, clothing, and non-perishable goods to thousands of displaced Katrina victims.

In 2008, in response to Hurricane Ike, Bishop Bryant again chaired the Emergency Disaster Relief Texas Inter-Jurisdictional Council.

During his fifty years of ministry, Bishop Bryant has been the recipient of many awards and honors, including the following: Meritorious Services To The Community by Mayor Fred Hofheinz; Meritorious Service To the Community by Mayor Kathryn Whitmire; Houston Police Department Public Service Award; Service Recognition Citation by Councilman Shelia Jackson Lee; Distinguished Service Award and Outstanding Leadership Award from COGIC Texas South Central Jurisdiction; Excellence In Service Award by United Minister's Institute of Texas Southern University; Special Achievement Award from The Religious Workers Guild; Outstanding Leadership AIM 2000 Church of God in Christ National Auxiliaries In Ministry Convention; by Bishop J. W. Macklin-AIM Chairman, Charles Harrison Mason Award The Religious Workers Guild, Visionary Pastors Award from the Houston Forward Times.

On October 17, 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria, the African Children's Hostel was named The Bishop Prince Bryant, Sr. African Children's Hostel in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, Bishop Bryant is married to Mrs. Yolanda Howard Bryant and they are the proud parents of five children: Superintendent Prince E. Bryant, II (Candies); Dommonique Jeannie Bryant; Phillip Paul Bryant; Elder Desmon Ryan Bryant (Franchell); and Tymorra Mishon Bryant.

They also have been blessed with five wonderful grandchildren: Prince E. Bryant, III, Paiton Anise Bryant, Pierce Edward O'neal Bryant, Madison Danielle Bryant, and John Patrick Bryant.

Mr. Speaker, for 50 years Bishop Bryant has provided remarkable service to our nation as a community, state, and national leader.

I am proud to call this remarkable American hero my friend and I offer him my heartfelt congratulations on the 50th Anniversary of his service in the ministry of the Gospel.

Bishop Bryant truly is a "Soldier of the Cross." I offer my best wishes for his continued success in ministering the Gospel for many years to come.

ANNOUNCING RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR THE THIRD DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor fourteen distinguished military veterans, community servants, and American patriots who call the Third District of Texas home. All faithfully answered the call of duty and placed service above self for the sake of our great nation. Each one leaves a legacy to be remembered, for future generations to follow, a legacy of bravery, loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. For their selfless service, bold leadership, and undying commitment for their neighbor and nation, the following individual has been selected as a recipient of the third annual Congressional Veteran Commendation:

Lance Corporal John Wangler served in the United States Marine Corps from 2007 to 2011. His commitment to the military began at